



Impact Factors and Attitudes Toward Organ Donation Among Transplantation Patients and Their Caregivers in China

Q.-X. Zhang^a, J.-F. Xie^{a,b}, J.-D. Zhou^a, S.-S. Xiao^a, A.-Z. Liu^c, G.-Q. Hu^c, Y. Chen^d, and C.-Y. Wang^{b,*}

^aThird Xiangya Hospital, Central South University, Changsha, China; ^bXiangya Nursing School, Central South University, Changsha, China; ^cXiangya School of Public Health, Central South University, Changsha, China; and ^dHuman Research Institute of Family Planning, Changsha, China

ABSTRACT

Purpose. This study's purpose was to investigate the attitudes toward organ donation among renal transplantation patients and their caregivers. In addition, we sought to explore the impact factors that affect their attitudes toward deceased organ donation.

Design and Methods. A self-administrated questionnaire was used, which consisted of two parts: 1) demographic data, and 2) transplantation and donation-related data. This study was conducted in three transplantation follow-up centers in three hospitals using a cross-sectional approach. SPSS 17.0 software was used to analysis descriptive and inferential statistics for data. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and logistic regression analysis.

Results. We received 426 effective questionnaires. The renal transplantation patients' mean age was 40.84 years. Among these patients, 67.8% were willing to accept the organ transplantation surgery for their relatives, 67.4% were willing to donate a living kidney to a close relative, 62.7% were willing to donate organs after death, 53.5% were willing to register in the national organ donation system, and 51.4% were willing to sign the organ donation consent when facing their relatives becoming a potential organ donor. Age, marriage status, education level, understanding of transplantation procedures and understanding of donation procedures had statistical significance in the difference of the attitudes toward donate their organs after death ($P < .05$).

Conclusions. Renal transplantation patients in our study are more willing to donate organs after death than their caregivers, but both their attitudes toward deceased donation were not very optimistic. There is a significant relationship between participants' willingness and knowledge of organ donation; patients with more understanding of the transplantation and donation procedure were more willing to donate organs after death. Affected by traditional values such as Confucianism, many people still cannot accept registering in the national organ donation system or sign the organ donation consent when facing their relatives becoming potential organ donors.

Clinical Relevance. There is a need to give adequate training regarding donation to increase donation rates. The government must provide education from the perspective of scientific knowledge to change the traditional views of the public, which may then increase the donation rate in China.

DESPITE the great advances in transplantation technology over the past decades, the shortage of organs for donation remains a worldwide problem. In Iran, 78% were willing to donate, but only 25% carried donor cards [1]. Each year there are approximately 300,000 organ failure patients in China, but only approximately 10,000 patients

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*Address correspondence to Chunyan Wang, Xiangya Nursing School, Central South University, 172 Tongzipo Road, Changsha 410013, China. E-mail: wangchunyanfw@126.com

have a chance for organ transplantation [2]. According to the China Ministry of Health, the demand-to-supply ratio of organ transplantation is 150:1 [3]. After February 2013, when the human organ donation plan was officially launched in China, donation after cardiac death has become the main source of organ donation, which eases the great tension of the Chinese donor market to a certain extent. As of March 20, 2016, a total of 6624 cases of organ donation succeeded in China (China Organ Donation Administrative Center). However, approximately 4.8 per million donors were deceased. Therefore, the shortage of organ donations had been a major limiting factor in transplantation programs, despite improvement in graft and patient survival rates.

Plausible reasons for this include sociocultural beliefs and traditions. Agreeing to sign organ donation cards implies mutilation of body at death or after, which is taboo and against religious beliefs in China. Attitudes about organ donation and volunteerism are important factors in the lack of donors. How to maximize the number of medically suitable organ donors has been a problem that has puzzled governments and researchers.

Research subjects concerning organ donation concentrated on university students and medical personnel, such as nurses and so on; however, there has been less research focusing on organ transplantation patients and their caregivers [4,5]. The organ transplantation patients and their caregivers are deemed to have a better understanding of organ transplantation and donation; many reports have shown that more knowledge about organ donation is associated with more positive attitudes toward organ donation [6,7]. Both organ transplantation patients themselves and their relatives are appreciative of other people's donations, as they have accepted organ transplantation. Therefore, as the direct beneficiaries of organ donation and organ transplantation, the organ transplantation patients are expected to have more positive attitudes toward the procedure than the general public; their attitudes will affect people around them, and may then cause widespread influence to society. To the best of our knowledge, the attitudes toward organ donation of the organ transplantation patients and their caregivers are not clear so far. This study sought to determine the attitudes regarding deceased organ donation among renal transplantation patients and their caregivers using a self-designed questionnaire, and examined the influencing factors.

METHODS

Design and Participants

This is a cross-sectional study using a convenient sampling approach. Between March and June 2016, 471 transplant follow-up out-patients and their caregivers completed a self-designed questionnaire for assessing their attitudes toward organ transplantation and donation. The study was conducted among transplantation follow-up outpatients from three hospitals: the Xiangya Hospital, the Second Xiangya Hospital, and the Third Xiangya Hospital. The inclusion criteria were as follows: 1) participants were 18 years of

age or older; 2) participants who received a successful kidney transplant (the donor sources were after cardiac death) and were not currently receiving dialysis therapy; 3) participants who were able to communicate in Chinese; and 4) participants who agreed to this study. The exclusion criteria included patients who had clinically diagnosed major psychiatric disorder, had cognitive impairment, had comorbid terminal illness, or who were clinically unstable. The primary caregivers' attitudes toward organ donation of these patients were also surveyed. Informed consent was obtained from each subject and this work was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Third Xiangya Hospital of Central South University. The participants completed a two-part questionnaire. The first part was concerned with the demographic data of the patients (i.e., gender, age, marital status, education level, employment status, monthly income, etc.). The second part of the questionnaire regarded transplantation and donation-related data (both the patients and their caregivers would complete this section). It included attitudes toward organ transplantation from the patients' relatives if necessary, attitudes toward donating an organ for your relatives (parents, spouse, children, and brothers or sisters) if necessary, attitudes toward donating your organs after death, attitudes toward online registration for self-donation, willingness to sign the organ donation consent form when facing your relatives becoming potential organ donors, understanding of transplantation procedures, and understanding of donation procedures, etc. At present, there is no standard questionnaire to measure the attitudes toward organ transplantation and donation of medical personnel worldwide. The questionnaire was self-designed and consisted of several questions. It was proven to be an effective tool on assessing the attitudes of organ transplantation and donation of hemodialysis patients in our preliminary research [8].

Measures

The study team included three chief nurses, four nurses, three nursing postgraduates, and four assistant nursing students. The nursing students participated in a 2-day training course on the investigation plan and questionnaire items. The team members guided participants in signing the informed consent forms and explained the study purpose and the concept of health education. The data were collected by field investigation and conducted in the conference room of the transplantation centers. All questionnaires were filled in anonymously, and each participant was allowed 30 to 45 minutes to finish the questionnaire. Assistance in reading was provided to patients with reading disabilities.

Data Analysis

All information from the questionnaires was entered into a computer according to serial numbers. SPSS 17.0 software was used to analyze the data of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The value of $P < .05$ was considered to be statistically significant. An alpha of .05 was determined beforehand.

RESULTS

Basic Characteristics of the Participants

Table 1 summarizes the demographics and level of understanding of transplantation and donation procedures of the participants. This survey adopted a random sample method. Four hundred seventy questionnaires were delivered, and 426 valid questionnaires were received. The valid rate was 90.6%, and the mean age of the patients was 40.84 years

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